



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

AUG 27 2009

Pamela Garrett
Bureau of Environmental Programs Resources
New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)
P.O. Box 600
Trenton, NJ 08625-0600

Dear Ms. Garrett:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed your July 21, 2009 Environmental Assessment (EA) describing the proposed Two Bridges Road Bridge and West Belt Highway extension project, which was conceived under the direction of the County of Passaic in cooperation with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), and neighboring Essex and Morris Counties in New Jersey. The proposed project will address traffic congestion within the project area and the condition of the existing Two Bridges Road Bridge over the Pompton River. It encompasses portions of the Borough of Lincoln Park, Wayne Township and Fairfield Township.

The preferred alternative includes construction of a new bridge 450 feet north of the existing bridge which does not meet safety standards. The new bridge would be connected to the existing West Belt Highway which currently terminates east of the current Two Bridges Road Bridge. The preferred alternative reduces and mitigates some of the probable environmental impacts of the proposed project. However, some issues need additional consideration and possibly structural changes to further minimize the cumulative impacts to the wetlands and wildlife.

The proposed project should consider making changes that would further reduce impacts to the naturally occurring wetland features as specified in Section 4, Wetlands -Open Waters, Figure V-7. EPA believes that the EA should have examined an alternative which did not include the West Belt extension. In addition, other alternatives which would minimize the impacts from extension should also have been explored. For example, a more northerly route across the western end of the wetlands, while impacting a parking lot of a business located north of the proposed bridge, would reduce wetland impacts and avoid isolating the western end of this wetland as currently proposed. Moreover, EPA believes that the applicants should explore reducing the width of the proposed four-foot wide shoulders through wetlands and address the practicability of using retaining walls to reduce wetland impacts. Also, the applicants should consider elevating the roadbed where the connecting West Belt extension impacts the wetlands and priority species.

The Wetlands-Open Waters section of the EA (Section 4, page V75) identified a need to mitigate through the purchase of credits from an approved wetland mitigation bank. C&C Builders LLC are located on a 186.66 acre parcel in Fairfield Township, Essex County. This bank received a total of 54.46 mitigation credits for freshwater wetland creation and enhancement activities. It can be contacted at (973) 276-0080. However, it is our understanding that credits may not be available for sale at this time, so you may want to investigate other wetland bankers in the New Jersey area.

In addition to addressing regulated resources, EPA would like to use this opportunity to encourage your agency and the contractors of this project to implement green practices and techniques during the design and operation of the project. For example, air emissions during construction will include particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10). To reduce the potential health and environmental impacts of these pollutants in the project area and to improve the conditions for the workers, the installation of diesel particulate filters (DPF) on construction equipment should be considered. DPFs can reduce diesel particulate emissions by 90 percent for stationary and non-stationary diesel equipment. To learn more about this technology and its application, you may reference DPFs at <http://www.epa.gov/oms/retrofit/nonroad-list.htm> or contact us directly. Enclosed are some additional greening recommendations that may be applicable to this project.

In summary, EPA believes that there are important issues regarding the preferred alternative that may warrant additional coordination between our agencies. We look forward to working with you as you reach a final decision on the project. In the meantime, if you have any questions relating directly to wetland issues, please contact Dan Montella, Leader of Wetlands Protection Team, at (212) 637-3801. Thank you for the opportunity to review this document. If you have any other questions concerning this letter, please contact Charles Harewood of my staff at (212) 637-3753.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Grace Musumeci". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Grace Musumeci, Chief
Environmental Review Section

Enclosure

cc: John C. Staples

U.S. EPA Region 2 Green Recommendations¹

Recommendations:

To the maximum extent possible, projects are encouraged to use local and/or recycled materials; to recycle materials generated onsite; and to utilize low emissions technology and fuels. Further, they should use, to the extent feasible, renewable energy (including, but not limited to solar, wind, geothermal, biogas, and biomass) and energy efficient technology in the design, construction, and operation of transportation, building, and infrastructure projects.

- **ENERGY STAR/Multi-media green building and land design practices**

Require green building practices which have multi-media benefits, including energy efficiency, water conservation, and healthy indoor air quality. Apply building rating systems and tools, such as Energy Star, Energy Star Indoor Air Package, and Water Sense for stimulus funded building construction. Third party high-bar, multimedia standards should be required for building construction and land design (LEED and Sustainable Sites Initiative, Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS), or local equivalent).

<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=64>

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=business.bus_bldgs

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bldrs_lenders_raters.nh_iap

- **Encourage water conservation in building construction**

Promote the use of water-efficient products to be used in new building construction through the use of WaterSense-labeled products and the use of contractors certified through a WaterSense-labeled program. <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/water/fed-agency.htm>

- **Encourage Low Impact Development to help manage storm water**

Low Impact Development (LID) is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage storm water as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat storm water as a resource rather than a waste product.

<http://www.epa.gov/nps/lid/>

- **Alternative and Renewable Energy**

The Department of Energy's "Green Power Network" (GPN) provides information and markets that can be used to supply alternative generated electricity. The following link identifies several suppliers of renewable energy. http://apps3.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/buying/buying_power.shtml?state=NJ

¹ "Green" here means environmentally sound practices in general and is not equivalent to the specific "green infrastructure" requirements in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Please note that this list is not meant to be all inclusive.

- **Ensure clean diesel practices**

Implement diesel controls, cleaner fuel, and cleaner construction practices for all on- and off-road equipment used for transportation, soil movement, or other construction activities, including:

- 1) Strategies and technologies that reduce unnecessary idling, including auxiliary power units, the use of electric equipment, and strict enforcement of idling limits;
- 2) Use of ultra low sulfur diesel fuel in nonroad applications ahead of the mandate; and
- 3) Use of the cleanest engines either through add-on control technologies like diesel oxidation catalysts and particulate filters, repowers, or newer, cleaner equipment

Encourage entities to consider adopting contract specifications requiring advanced pollution controls and clean fuels. A model spec is online at (applies to both on and non-road engines):

<http://www.northeastdiesel.org/pdf/NEDC-Construction-Contract-Spec.pdf>

Additional Information: <http://www.epa.gov/diesel/construction/contract-lang.htm>

How to guide: <http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/diesel/connetro.pdf>

- **Promote the use of recycled materials in highway and construction projects**

Many industrial and construction byproducts are available for use in road or infrastructure construction. Use of these materials can save money and reduce environmental impact. The Recycled Materials

Resource Center has developed user guidelines for many recycled materials and compiled existing national specifications. <http://www.recycledmaterials.org/tools/uguidelines/index.asp>

<http://www.recycledmaterials.org/tools/uguidelines/standards.asp>

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserv/rrr/imr/index.htm>

- **Encourage safe reuse and recycling of construction wastes**

Promote reuse and recycling at the 50% (by weight) level for building, road, and bridge project construction and demolition debris wastes. The *Federal Green Construction Guide for Specifiers* includes a construction waste management specification.

http://www.wbdg.org/design/greenspec_msl.php?s=017419

- **Encourage sustainable storm water management at building sites**

Implement site planning, design, construction, and maintenance strategies to maintain or restore, to the maximum extent technically feasible, the predevelopment hydrology of the building site with regard to the temperature, rate, volume, and duration of flow.

http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=298

Consider designs for storm water management on compacted, contaminated soils in dense urban areas:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/publications/swdp0408.pdf>.

- **Encourage cost-efficient, environmentally friendly landscaping**

EPA's GreenScapes program provides cost-efficient and environmentally friendly solutions for landscaping. Designed to help preserve natural resources and prevent waste and pollution, GreenScapes encourages companies, government agencies, other entities, and homeowners to make more holistic decisions regarding waste generation and disposal and the associated impacts on land, water, air, and energy use. <http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserv/rrr/greenscapes/index.htm>

- **Incorporate onsite energy generation and energy efficient equipment upgrades into projects at drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities**

Promote the use of captured biogas in combined heat and power systems and/or renewable energy (wind, solar, etc.) to generate energy for use onsite as well as upgrades to more energy efficient equipment (pumps, motors, etc.)

http://www.epa.gov/waterinfrastructure/bettermanagement_energy.html

- **Encourage land development in brownfield and infill sites**
Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties takes development pressures off of undeveloped, open land, and both improves and protects the environment. These sites are often “infrastructure-ready,” eliminating the need to build new roads and utility lines which are necessary in undeveloped land.
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>
- **Use the Integrated Design process on building developments**
Current procurement practices tend to separate out development into distinct stages that discourage communication across the project lifecycle. The Integrated Design process calls for the active and continuing engagement of all stakeholders throughout the building design, development, and construction phases including the owners, architects, engineers, building department officials, and other professionals. This process can help create a higher performing building at lower costs, allows for various building systems to work together, eliminates redundancy from overdesign and unnecessary capacity, and minimizes change orders during the construction phase. We encourage revising procurement practices so that it can use the Integrated Design process.
http://www.wbdg.org/design/engage_process.php
- **Encourage use of Smart Growth and transit oriented development principles**
Smart Growth and transit oriented development (TOD) principles help preserve natural lands and critical environmental areas, and protect water and air quality by encouraging developments that are walkable and located near public transit.
<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth>
- **Ensure environmentally preferable purchasing**
Promote markets for environmentally preferable products by referencing EPA’s multi-attribute Environmentally Preferable Purchasing guidance. <http://www.epa.gov/epp>
- **Purchase ‘green’ electronics, and measure their benefits**
Require the purchase of desktop computers, monitors, and laptops that are registered as Silver or Gold products with EPEAT, the Electronics Product Environmental Assessment Tool (www.epeat.net). Products registered with EPEAT use less energy, are easier to recycle, and can be more easily upgraded than non-registered products. Energy savings, CO₂ emission reductions, and other environmental benefits achieved by the purchase, use and recycling of EPEAT-registered products can be quantified using the Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator (<http://eerc.ra.utk.edu/ccpct/eebc/eebc.html>).
- **Incorporate greener practices into remediation of contaminated sites**
Encourage or incentivize the use of greener remediation practices, including designing treatment systems with optimum energy efficiency; use of passive energy technologies such as bioremediation and phytoremediation; use of renewable energy to meet power demands of energy-intensive treatment systems or auxiliary equipment; use of cleaner fuels, machinery, and vehicles; use of native plant species; and minimizing waste and water use. <http://clu.in.org/greenremediation/index.cfm>